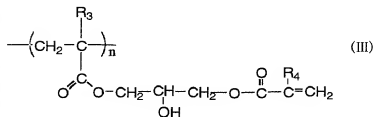
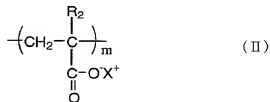
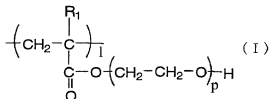
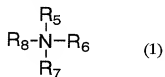


What is Claimed is:

1. A polymer compound containing monomer units represented by formulas (I) to (III):



wherein each of R₁ to R₄ is hydrogen and/or a methyl group; p represents an integer between 1 to 10 inclusive; X represents hydrogen, an alkali metal, or an ammonium represented by formula (1):



wherein each of R₅ to R₈ represents hydrogen, a C1-C3 alkyl group, or a C1-C3 alkanol group; and a plurality of Xs may be

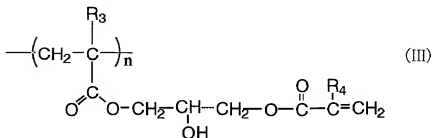
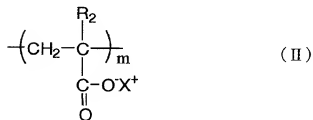
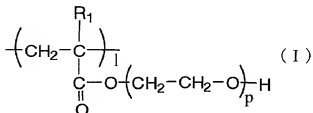
the same or different from one another,

the compositional proportions of the monomer units falling within the following ranges:

2 mol% $\leq l \leq 73$ mol%; 8 mol% $\leq m \leq 83$ mol%; and 15 mol% $\leq n \leq 80$ mol%.

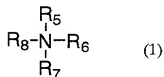
2. A polymer compound according to claim 1 also containing a monomer unit other than monomer units represented by formula (I) to (III) in an amount of 10 mol% or less.

3. A method of producing a polymer compound containing monomer units represented by formula (I) to (III):



wherein each of R_1 to R_4 is hydrogen and/or a methyl group; p

represents an integer between 1 to 10 inclusive; X represents hydrogen, an alkali metal, or an ammonium represented by formula (1):



wherein each of R_5 to R_8 represents hydrogen, a C1-C3 alkyl group, or a C1-C3 alkanol group; and a plurality of Xs may be the same or different from one another, and the compositional proportions of the monomer units falling within the following ranges: $2 \text{ mol}\% \leq l \leq 73 \text{ mol}\%$; $8 \text{ mol}\% \leq m \leq 83 \text{ mol}\%$; and $15 \text{ mol}\% \leq n \leq 80 \text{ mol}\%$,

which method comprises adding glycidyl (meth)acrylate in a predetermined amount to a copolymer comprising at least (meth)acrylic acid and at least one of 2-hydroxyethyl (meth)acrylate and polyoxyethylene mono(meth)acrylate.

4. A method of producing a polymer compound according to claim 3, wherein at least one of an N-nitrosophenylhydroxylamine ammonium salt and 4-hydroxy-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-1-oxyl is employed as a polymerization inhibitor.

5. A photosensitive composition containing, as a component, a polymer compound as recited in claim 1.

6. A photosensitive composition according to claim 5, which contains water as a solvent.

7. A photosensitive composition according to claim 5, which contains a polymerizable monomer.

8. A photosensitive composition according to claim 5, which contains a colorant.

9. A photosensitive composition according to claim 5, which contains at least one of a photopolymerization initiator and a photosensitizer.

10. A pattern formation method comprising forming a coating film by use of a photosensitive composition as recited in claim 5 and developing by use of water; i.e., a neutral developer.